



Rockwell International



## **November 2006**

### **Issue #11**

This newsletter is sent out to all who have called in on the AWA net and who have email facility, and those who have paid for mail envelopes, with the hopes that it will encourage you to call in again and help to keep the AWA net alive and well.

Should you not want to receive any further publications of this newsletter, drop me a note and I will take you off the mailing list. Should you prefer to receive a hard copy via snail mail, please send an SASE for the period you would like to receive these and I will process for you.

### **Happenings:**

There still has been no response to our call for nominations for a President for 2007. This will have to take place during the month of November as the new President should be installed in office before the end of the year. A small committee should also be elected to assist whoever it may be.

The positions available are:

President  
Technical Advisor  
Public Relations  
Net Controller  
Newsletter Editor

I have my thoughts on this issue, but would not like to influence any one else into making any kind of decisions. So for the next 3 weeks on the net, I would like this to become a topic of discussion, so that by the end of November, we can take votes over the air and early December, pass over the reigns to the New President and his committee. Please come up and give us your thoughts.

**ZS0AWA/CW.**



The CW net continues along with very little activity over the past month probably due to band conditions. Heard on frequency this last month has been Barrie ZS6AJY, John ZS6ABJ, Ian ZS5IAN and Clive ZS6AVP. 40m is definitely starting to improve as can be heard on the morning SSB net. Join us on Saturday afternoons at 14:00 SAST. The net is run at 12 wpm and so should meet the needs of all interested in CW. 7020 is the frequency.

### **AM Net:**

With the improvement in 40m, it may soon be suitable to try our AM call in at 09:15 on Saturday mornings. So get the old AM transmitters blown out again and warm up those valves. Some of the stations have had fairly good results working anything from 5w to 150w on AM and things should really get better from now on.

The AM group on Wednesday evening may start to have even more problems now and as propagation improves, so has the QRN with the upcoming summer storms. So far we have still managed some good comms and we look forward to hearing more stations on frequency.

The following stations have called in on the AM net on Wednesday evenings: ZS5RK, ZS5DR, ZS5IN, ZS2AB, ZS6ALL, ZS6BOX, ZS6RAD, ZS6WLC and yours truly ZS6ADY

Please come up and join us if you have the time and the inclination. 19:30 Wednesday evenings on 3615. Where only the brave hang out after dark.

### **SSB Net:**

Again with the improvement in 40m it is no longer necessary to run the 40/80m relay. I will still monitor 80m every Saturday just in case there are any glitches and you can't hear the control station, call in on 80 and let me know and we can relay from 40 to 80 so that you can hear all stations, or at least the control station.

We appeal to all of you, when calling in on 40m, should you not be able to hear the control station, please try 80m if you are able to. Otherwise we have people doubling and it really does make life difficult.

### **Promotions:**

Remember to promote the AWA to any Hams you might know who have an interest in the old valve rigs. I have spoken to many at flea markets and other gatherings who are not really aware of the AWA and what it is we are doing. Remember, our mission statement says that it includes all "Like minded amateurs who have an interest in.....". We need to be looking out for those who have an interest in antique wireless.

# Heath Company

This remarkable company began in Michigan around 1926, with fits and starts, by marketing an airplane in kit form. In fact, founder Edwin Heath died in a crash. After the war, Heath got into electronics with a low-cost oscilloscope kit using military surplus parts. Kit building became a popular pastime, not to mention a way to save some big bucks on equipment, and Heath's catalog came to include everything from electronic toys to TV sets, complete hi-fi systems, and eventually even computers. Heath always had two ham lines, one aimed at beginners, and one for the old-timer looking for a good rig at a good price. The beginner's gear was rudimentary, used few tubes, and typically cost next to nothing even in 50s and 60s money. Any kid could get on the air with this stuff, and a lot of them did. Just about everybody had a DX-40 around somewhere.

The old timer gear was usually solid, using tried and true designs. Sometimes these were pretty close to other products that had proven successful in ham use. Open up a DX-100, and you'll find a pretty good imitation of the Johnson Viking. Both of these were workhorse transmitters on AM and CW, and the DX-100 had a later SSB adapter. In the 60s, Heath modernized its look, with a sleeker DX-60 transmitter, a matching receiver, and some big rigs named after Indian tribes. The Apache was kind of a hot-rod DX-100, and a popular boat anchor. It was followed by the more advanced (and harder to build) Marauder. There were linears, the Chippewa and Warrior, and the RX-1 Mohawk, a receiver.

Unless a piece of gear was really complex, which it hardly ever was, the ham boxes came in kit form only. Thus every Heath boat anchor out there was built by some guy, in his garage or basement, with a soldering iron, a screwdriver, and a couple of little wrenches that Heath usually included.

This dictated a certain approach to mechanical and electrical design. "We won't let you fail," was one of their slogans. The gear, especially the older transmitters, is usually pretty easy to work on, and there are a million mods out. Of course, it also means that some of these boat anchors will look like art works inside, while others will have solder splashed in funny places, or black tape around melted insulation from when smoke came out the first time. Caveat emptor!

The later SB- series turns up at swap meets all the time. These look a lot like the Collins S-line, but with green panels and chrome knobs and about one-fifth the workmanship. A couple of linears, the SB-200 and SB-220, are still very popular. The 200 is about the size and power of the Collins 30L-1, but with much different controls and tubes. The 220 is a 200 on steroids, in a fatter box, and using 3-500Zs. There have been hundreds of articles with good 220 mods, mostly for stability and more RF choking at lower frequencies. The 220 remains a viable choice for the experienced BA type who understands the safety hazards of such high powered equipment, who won't blow himself/herself up, and who wants to make some serious RF, cheap.

Heath also made some interesting little transceivers, the Tener, Sixer and Twoer. These

AM monobanders were also called the "Benton Harbor Lunch Boxes," which gives a pretty good idea of their size and shape. They even had little handles on top. Heath sold an awful lot of these, getting a lot of people onto the higher bands.

Heath was bought by Daystrom in the 50s, followed in the 60s by a complex arrangement after Zenith bought the company. Gradually, as electronic gear became too complex to build from a pile of parts in a garage, the company shifted into computers, robotics and advanced home automation products. The rapidly-growing



computer line gained a market share under the name Zenith Data Systems, while the robotics morphed into the popular line of Heath/Zenith home lighting and security products using infrared sensors. The educational division continued on as Heathkit Educational Systems.

Finally, in 1991, the last kit was discontinued. After some further ownership changes, the lighting and security products division and the Heath Company brand name, were spun off to DESA International. These products are still made, but the quality appears to have deteriorated, as anyone who has seen a rain storm lobotomize their security light knows only too well.

And so today, this tangled tale of post-modern capitalism leaves Heathkit Educational Systems as the surviving entity. It's still in Benton Harbor, with a few Heathkit employees left, where it markets a successful line of educational training systems for learning electronics.

### Restoration News:

I have received a consignment of valves from Hans von Kampen at Trans World Radio in Swaziland, which I have been hastily trying to catalogue and get in to the valve listing. Hence my being late on getting the list of valves out this last month. The list will be posted after this newsletter, whether I have finished updating or not.

Barry – ZS6AJY also gave me a few valves left from his clean up and a whole lot of plug in crystals. So anyone looking for that sort of thing, let me know and I will scratch for what you may need.

### Shack News:

Rad, ZS6RAD, sent me this updated photo of his shack with some interesting new additions.



Top shelf L-R Yaesu FL/FR-50 B combo + linears for 70cm, 2m and 6m.

Middle shelf L-R Hallicrafters HT-44, PS 120-150, SX-117, IC575 10 to 6m, IC735 HF over IC271 2m, IC 290e 2m over IC 471 70cm.

lower middle L-R MFJ 486 memory keyer, Yaesu 800 SDX rotator, Yaesu 1000 SDX rotator.

Bottom KW Viceroy and Power supply, Yaesu FR-50B.

Front Asatic desk mike with D104 head and IC SM8 dual desk mike

Out of picture on right MFJ 962C Antenna Tuner and Heathkit Monitor scope HO-10 and on bottom shelf Heathkit SB-200 and Yaesu FL-2100z.



## Swap Column:

Any swaps or items for sale in the antique line ? Let me have the details and we will advertise it here.

There is an online swap shop on the website of the Highway Amateur Radio Club for ALL amateurs and interested parties to use - it is not restricted to members only. We have been invited to make use of this facility too. Should you want to, use the link to the HARC at the end of the page to take you to their website.

If you would like to forward this newsletter to any other interested parties, please feel free to do so. Print it out and put in on your club notice board, or give it to someone interested in valve radios. If you know of any who report in on the net but don't have email, print it out and give them a copy.

Net days and times:

Saturday 08:30 SSB net - frequency – 7070Mhz

Saturday 09:15 AM net – frequency 7070Mhz

Saturday 14:00 CW net – frequency 7020Mhz

Wednesday 19:30 AM net – frequency 3615 (-5 for QRM)

This, and past copies of the AWA Newsletter can be downloaded from <http://members.harc.org.za/newsletters/AWA/>. Our thanks to the Highway Amateur Radio Club in Durban (<http://www.harc.org.za>) for providing this service to our members and other interested parties.

Ronnie – ZS5ABD, sent me these photo's of Om Andries - ZS4APA, house in the Freestate. Not only does Andries collect Antique wireless', but most things that are antique. Ronnie says it looks like a museum.





Thanks for the bandwidth.

DE ZS6ADY FOR ZS0AWA